Level of alkalinity in soil/fertile land

533. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to continuous and increased use of chemical fertilizers, the level of alkalinity and salinity in the soil/fertile land has gone up high;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the use of gypsum has been very useful in brining down salinity and alkalinity level; and

(c) if so, the immediate efforts being made by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) There is no evidence to suggest about increased level of alkalinity and salinity in the soil due to continuous and increased use of chemical fertilizers. Investigations under All India Coordinated Research Project under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on 'Long Term Fertilizer Experiments' over the last few decades in different locations also didn't reveal such instances.

(b) and (c) Gypsum is being used for recalmation of alkaline soils. The Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS) since 7th Five Year Plan for reclamation of soils, which are suffering from alkalinity. Presently this scheme is subsumed under Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA). Under the scheme, financial assistance limited to 25% is being given for providing soil amendment (Gypsum/ pyrite) @ 50% of Gypsum Required value or maximum of 5 tonnes per hectare for isolated approach and maximum of 15 tonnes per hectare for projectized approach.

Policy on contract farming

534. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is actively considering to frame a policy on contract farming with a view to co-ordinate production and marketing activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof and when it is expected to be initiated; and

(c) how far this shall be helpful to the small farmers for better remuneration of their produce particularly in backward areas/districts of Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Model Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act circulated by the Central Government to the States in 2003 for implementing marketing reforms has provisions for the registration of contract farming sponsors and recording of contract farming agreements with the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) or a prescribed authority under the Act, protection of title or rights of the farmers over the land under such cotnracts, dispute settlement mechanism and a model draft agreement suggesting various terms and conditions. To help States in the formulation of Rules in this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture has also circulated a set of Model APMC Rules to them for adoption. By now, relevant provisions have been made by several State Governments/ UTs in their respective APMC Acts for providing a legal framework to contract farming. In seven States/Union Territories there are no APMC Acts, therefore, there is no regulation of contract farming in such States/UTs. The Model Act circulated by the Ministry is suggestive in nature, and, since Agriculture is a State subject, it is for the State Governments to decide on the implementation, intermediation and monitoring of the contract farming arrangements in their State.